LITTLE GRAY SONGS FROM ST. JOSEPH'S

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By Grace Fallow Norton

WHAT IS YOUR LEGION?

ROADS.

A SISTER OF THE WIND AND OTHER POEMS.

LITTLE GRAY SONGS FROM ST. JOSEPH'S.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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BY

GRACE FALLOW NORTON

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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"Une odeur d'éther un jour de soleil"

In the winter of 1903, a cold night and a colder dawning sent girls shivering to their work in the factories of an American town. Among them Leonie X . . . , the still girl who never told her name. She, frail as she was and weary, slipped upon the icy pavement and fell. The hurt proving dire, she was carried to a small Franciscan hospital hard by, where she lay for two years — true to herself — saying little with her lips and much with her mournful eyes.

Here she wrote many "little letters to herself," which were hidden beneath her pillow and which the good Sister Jerome, who was her sole nurse, lovingly preserved after her death.

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Flame beaten to ash by the too-fierce wind of a day;
Flower torn at the roots, ere noon-tide drooping, gray;

Flower of a singing soul, laughing flame of a life —
But the laughter and song, where are they? Lost in that sore wind-strife.

. . . . . .

Pray to the souls of men, ere the new day rises in power,
Pray to the souls of men: "Forget not the flame and the flower."

LITTLE GRAY SONGS FROM ST. JOSEPH'S

I

Here I lie like a princess—
  All wound in white;
Lilies tall at my bedside,
  For my delight;

Hushed feet make in my chamber
  Music for me:
Silence answers with phrases
  Of her minstrelsy.

Who could be fairer than I am,
  All wound in white?
Who could be gladder of beauty,
  And beauty's delight?

O for the whiteness and fairness —
But O, to be free!
Pain has the key to my chamber:
He prisons me.

II

Sister Jerome is very tired and she must sleep;
There is no other guard to keep,
And so the night must be watched through with pain —
Ah me, my sentinel again.

The pain is like a little flame within the night,
A bright white sword, from it no flight . . .
Slow hours, unrolling dully, endlessly,
O say, when will to-morrow be?

In an eternity of dark and stillness strange,
Around and 'round with pain I range,
Remembering nothing fair. . . . There is no way,
There is no path unto the day.

III

There be some that seaward roam,
  Adventurers of mere and main;
They watch the wave, follow the foam.
There be those that hunt at home,
  Adventurers of pain.

There be those that leave the vale,
  And from the hearth-stone turn away,
Heart-homeless if their footsteps fail
Some houseless snowy height to scale,
  Ere light dies with the day.

There be some would know the North,
  And some would plant the desert-place:
Daily their feet are driven forth,
Their hands have measured the round earth —
  Adventurers of space.

And they that hunt at home — that lie
  Unhelped, alas, of near and far?
O gulfs as great gather their cry,
And hosts as fair their victory —
  The seekers of the Star.

To leap to some sharp peak of pain,
  To scream white-mouth'd upon those
    heights,
Transported by a truth made plain —
From mad despair to wrest the rein —
  To delve in breathless nights

As they were mines of gold for men —
  Bravely to launch on each new day
A hope, wave-racked and wrecked again —
To conquer through the fever-fen —
  Toward Death to lead the way.

O, there be some that seaward roam,
Adventurers of mere and main;
They watch the wave, follow the foam.
There be those that hunt at home,
Adventurers of pain.

IV

Last night I had a guest:
Terror visited me.
To-day I lie dumb — at rest
After my agony.

Where should he have his home,
That he be nigh to hunt me?
Who are they naming his name?
Live they morn's light to see?

Grief and pain I have known;
Now I am learning three.
Thou wast lacking — Terror — alone,
Of the grim Trinity.

Last night I had a guest:
Terror visited me.
To-day I lie dumb — at rest
After my agony.

V

When I was a wee child
A-singing in the sun,
Came the knell, like a leper's bell,
Of the Fateful One.

In his mouth was hunger,
In his hand was want;
There I shook beneath his look,
Bled beneath his vaunt:

"I am lord of bodies,
I am lord of souls;
I am lord of half the horde
That die between the poles.

"I laugh at all the teachers
That have not taught of me.
I make the rules for all their schools—
My name is Poverty.

"I laugh at all the nations
That have no thought of me:
For still their laws of me are cause —
My name is Poverty."

When I was a wee child,
A-singing in the sun,
Came a knell, like a leper's bell:
'T was the Fateful One.

VI

If my dark grandam had but known,
  Or yet my wild grandsir,
Or the lord that lured the maid away
  That was my sad mother,

O had they known, O had they dreamed
  What gift it was they gave,
Would they have stayed their wild, wild love,
  Nor made my years their slave?

Must they have stopped their hungry lips
  From love at thought of me?
O life, O life, how may we learn
  Thy strangest mystery?

Nay, they knew not, as we scarce know;
  Their souls, O let them rest;
My life is pupil unto pain —
  With him I make my quest.

VII

Because white hands clasped white hands,
And white arms wound white arms,
I 'm wandering through the wide world,
Driven by those same heart-storms.

Because white arms wound white arms
Must mine hang quivering, bare,
All fain to reach and clasp again
White arms again as fair.

Did they that clasped desire me?
O no, 't was heart on heart,
'T was lip to lip and life for life—
Now living is my part.

Did they that loved stand awed at
My masked inheritance?
They laughed and called the echo . . .
I am a child of chance.

Children of chance we wander,
  Possessed by those who gave
The undesired, unthought, unsought —
  The life that we must save.

They asked for one another:
  Blind Nature grimly hurled
A soul out through their gates of love,
  To walk their weary world.

VIII

O 't was not they through whom I breathed
That laid alone the spell;
Behold the people of our land
Live but to buy and sell.

To buy and sell — they call it life;
But I had gifts to give;
I said, "O let me give my gifts,
Thus only may I live."

But I must sell my gift of gifts,
And I must buy again,
And fierce is traffic, fierce as war,
And numbers too its slain.

I had so much to give to life,
But when my gift was sold,
Came those who measured my heart's blood
Into their cups of gold.

They trade in life; we that would live
Fall Death's heirs in that strife.
O what is there they buy or build
So dear as would be — life?

IX

What shall repay for waste of life?
What shall repay for pain?
O what shall give the land its food
If the young wheat have no rain?
How shall the reaper call it good,
If trampled it hath lain?

O what shall give the land its men
If children fight its wars,
If youth to the market-place they bring,
And man his manhood mars
To give some king a golden ring,
Or his lords their gilded stars?

X

A great Injustice walks abroad,
Unchained, unterrified.
Who shall rejoice beside
The poison of his dragon-breath,
The early blight, the daily death,
(Behold, thus have I died).

A great Injustice walks abroad,
And makes the strong more strong,
Until the hurt, whose song
I sing, shall learn their hidden strength,
And healed by hope, arise at length,
And rend the ancient wrong.

XI

And sometimes I have little dreams,
Faint and fair and far away;
With them I play.
O dare I tell
Of the ones I love well?
I love most the unreal,
The never-to-be.
They cry to me,
"Little sister, can you not feel
How it is with us —
Wandering, squandering thus
All our sweet beauty,
And, never, never to be?"

O yes, I best can feel
You, the unreal,
For you are — me!
Me, and all that I may not be.

Strong I am and straight and fair,
Strong and long and gold my hair,
(This doth but seem,
It is my dream).
And I dance
(I who may not turn
So for motion yearn);
I advance
And slowly whirl till all
The things on round earth's ball
Slowly whirl with me.
And I am beautiful and free,
And the world is my garden,
For my growth and for all men.

Little poignant joy-dreams come —
(Never to be,
Never to be);
Some have lips of love and some

Laughing faces, tiny hands —
Such sweet things bloom in dream-lands.
Never to be,
Never to be,
But who shall take from me
Dream-dance and dream-bliss,
Dream-clasp and dream-kiss!

XII

O sweetest dreams, I reach to you!
You fade, you fail, you were not true.

Back from my lovely dream-garden,
I 'm sent to seek the real again.

The real — here in my little room
A red, red rose of pain doth bloom,

A red, red rose of pain doth glow,
And it is real and all I know.

A wild, wild poison-rose of pain,
That I must tend in vain, in vain.

Whose hand should plant the burning rose?
O my seared soul — who knows, who knows?

XIII

The Sisters sing, "O Mary hear;
Sweet Mother, intercede."
But Jesu's mother does not heed:
She has been dead this many a year.

The Sisters sing, "O Mary hear,
Thou who art Motherhood." . . .
The dumb earth spawns her struggling brood
To waste, unnumbered, year by year.

XIV

Mary, mother of Christ's body,
I have no songs to sing to thee;
The long, long years for thy grief's rack:
Mine eyes turn forward and not back.

The long, long past from thee to me
Is full of mothers' misery,
And griefs of girls and Stranger Sons —
The long, long hope before us runs.

The incense they have burned to thee,
O puzzling strange it is to me:
Slaughter of sons in thy son's name,
And motherhood turned to maiden's shame.

Mary, mother of misery,
Here I give thanks — girl that I be —
No son of mine shall drain the cup
That Jesu's hand hath filléd up.

(Here I give thanks — girl that I be —
O the young torn heart of me!
Branch at the window telleth of Spring:
My body hath no burgeoning.)

O will-less, mute Maternity —
(Mary, mother of slavery).
No link I be in the long, long chain
Of human sighs and human pain.

XV

How long I 've lain below the Christ
That hangs upon the wall,
His suffering o'er my suffering:
Was his indeed for all?

Ah me, the weary, weary hours
So slowly by us file,
And not yet has the sad Christ learned —
As I have learned — to smile.

XVI

Four gray walls, four gray walls,
One green window-space;
Four gray walls — high up on one
The crucifix has place.

Four gray walls, four gray walls,
Ere the eye can trace,
Past the high-hung crucifix,
The window's green leaf-lace.

Four gray walls, four gray walls —
O the four-square grayness palls
Of my prison-space!
Dying Christ be thankéd for
One green window's grace.

XVII

Sister Jerome, Sister Jerome,
Come take my white hot hands,
For I would tell you a little tale
Of lovely far-off lands.

Sweet my child,
Hark to the bell
That bids me hasten . . .
What have you to tell?

Sister Jerome, Sister Jerome,
'T is such a little tale—
So far away from fever—
Just of a cool dim vale

Where two wee winds come singing,
Singing through the trees:
O every night they come and sing
Their sweet wind-melodies.

They bring deep breaths of coolness
And healing summer rain,
And silvery, silvery soft they fling
It on the window-pane;

And all the folks that hear them
Lie very still and sleep;
They do not moan and murmur — no —
Nor say strange words and weep;

For the little winds bring coolness
And healing summer rain,
And then they softly laugh and kiss
And turn and go again.

O when the pain beats brightly,
Go, take each by the hand —
The sufferers; bid them dream the way
To that peace-flooded land.

Dear my child,
  Sure I will tell
Of the kind wee winds. . . .
  Hark again the bell.

XVIII

The halls are full of strangers;
Each lies alone and pain
Doth bind each one with his red chain.

They think not of each other —
Their pain looms mountain-high:
It towers o'er the void where they lie.

I've longed to see their faces,
For then I might forget
In what hard ways my feet are set.

The hard ways of that bondage,
Do they too know them all?
Strangers — I stumble there and fall!

XIX

This house of pain where we must dwell,
Whose hand raised high its towers?
What heart to other hearts did tell
The woe and want of ours?

It was the mighty heart of All;
It was the mighty hand
Of All that rise and rule and fall
Within the mighty land.

How strange to feel, weak and alone,
By strength companionéd;
How strange to be, though all unknown,
Thus known and housed and fed.

But what are we to them, to All,
As idle-ill we lie,
And eat their bread, their helpers call,
Nor help not till we die?

As we were lolling queens and kings
In robes of pain arrayed,
The folk from far its tribute brings —
At our pale feet 't is laid.

A bed of pain for each a throne;
To rule in very deed,
What sceptre should we call our own?
Ah this — our utter need.

XX

Nay, we are loads for them to lift,
And straws to show their current's drift,
And we are riddles they must sift,
  Even riddles they must read.
And we are signs of their unthrift —
Ay — signs of tasks that they have left.
They shall be shriven with this shrift:
  "Go make their need your need."

XXI

The Sister for her soul's white sake,
The Doctor for his trade,
Druscilla for the pence she 'll make —
(Our dreary little maid);

Sweet Sister Christopher for peace;
Father Saran to win
A seat of surety and ease
Far from the fear of sin.

The folk that pay us tithes — again
'T is for their hearts' relief,
That we have burdened with our pain,
And wounded with our grief.

The Sister for her soul's white sake —
(I say it o'er and o'er) —
So many are the ways they take,
To serve our needs the more:

So many are the ends they 'd make
Through pathway of our need.
The smoking flax for torch they take,
For crutch — the bruiséd reed.

XXII

I hear our Doctor's hard step by my door:
He brings a guest to look the sick folk o'er;

For great men come his surgeon-skill to see,
To learn of life from our mortality.

Who 's here? A grizzled man from overseas,
Deep-browed, keen-eyed to look upon disease.

And must I lie thus solely for a show,
That they may say, "The fever fell even so;

To-morrow it will rise again,
And with it bring the coughing and the pain"?

Is there no more for us than fever-flow,
O deep-eyed, aged sir, before you go?

Beside this tale of death, no living truth,
Between your towering age, my stricken
youth?

I smile up at him softly. O there lies
An answering smile in his compassionate eyes.

XXIII

There is a desert of despair,
  Where never seed was sown;
There is a wilderness called night,
  Wherein I lie alone,
And there my voice goes crying forth.
  O were a sound a star!
My cry is all there is of light
  In a land where no lamps are.

XXIV

Best I love Sister Jerome;
Her arms are my only home,

Her strong arms and the white bed
Where they laid my weary head.

Sister Jerome — how does she know
'T is the heart that hurts one so?

Not the fever, not the wound,
But the lone heart, burned and ground.

Not the body-bruise that stings,
Just the heart's poor broken wings.

Sister Jerome — how does she know?
'T is not thus with Sister Otho.

Was her soul born, say, a flower,
Opening in her own birth-hour,

Babe and blossom at one birth?
(Thus some souls have come to earth).

Fair as ever a soul should be,
Just the hue of sympathy;

(Color of grief, color of fear,
Color of courage, too, and cheer.)

Or, long since may she have gone,
Soulless, silent, sweet and wan —

Cold as Sister Christopher —
Till great LIFE appeared to her,

Rent her still heart-heaven with woe,
That the White Dove might come through?

XXV

O that it might be soon!
But no — I fear the strong bright sun —
I fear his burning noon.

His smile 's for ruddier flowers;
Ashamed of such a frail pale thing,
He 'd hide away and showers

Would come like my old tears;
O no, dear Sister, I must stay,
Lest sunlight turn to sneers.

XXVI

O far away, O far away,
Our father was the sun,
Our mother was the unknowing earth,
When day and night were one —
Ere ever hearts had found them out,
Or pain his race begun.

O far away, O far away,
Sun set the little spark
Of life I fan with my faint breath,
Earth made on me her mark —
Then turned her mother-face away,
And launched me in the dark.

Across the dark of pain and sigh,
Child of the sun I 've come;
Daughter of earth doth languish here,
An exile from her home —
Doth hide her face before the light
Within a living tomb.

But spark of sun, it is not quenched —
The fire is in mine eyes,
And deep within my deep, deep soul
Earth-stillness ever lies;
Even light and silence lie beneath
My passing pain-wrung cries.

XXVII

What say
Bright leaves of day,
By the laughing wind caressed?

"All young things
Should dance in the sun:
There joy sings
To every one."

What say
Sweet flowers of day,
That strive not, yet are blest?

"All young things
Should live in the sun:
There joy sings
To every one."

What say
At shut of day,
Two bird-calls from the west?

"All young things
Should love in the sun:
There joy sings
To every one."

XXVIII

I would I might behold
One little child
Grow up with naught but joy.
O my heart is sure
That child would be more pure,
More beautiful,
More wonderful,
Than any dream hath told —
Of a beauty without alloy.

But mayhap he would be too fair,
For our eyes as yet too rare . . .
For since the world with sorrow is defiled,
Even the Most Beautiful
Must our sorrow share.

XXIX

From the world beyond my window blind
A wandering thought drifts down,
And still within my fallow mind —
A seed of song — 't is sown.

O urge of life, thy wind-blown seeds.
Strange fruits may bear unto men's needs.

O many men have thought this thought,
And many lips have striven
To utter it, and hands have sought
To shape it as 't was given.

And some have builded it in stone,
With it some sail the seas,
And some have sung it all alone
(And I am one of these).

And some have caught and held it fast,
  Then felt its need for flight;
Now it has come to me at last,
  I sing it through the night.

I do but sing it to my soul
  That other souls may know,
And, starless, thus their dark console—
  Then let it, singing, go.

O Urge of Life, thy wind-blown seeds
Strange fruits may bear unto men's needs.

XXX

With cassock black, baret and book,
Father Saran goes by;
I think he goes to say a prayer
For one who has to die.

Even so, some day, Father Saran
May say a prayer for me;
Myself meanwhile, the Sister tells,
Should pray unceasingly.

They kneel who pray: how may I kneel
Who face to ceiling lie,
Shut out by all that man has made
From God who made the sky?

They lift who pray — the low earth-born —
A humble heart to God:
But O, my heart of clay is proud —
True sister to the sod.

I look into the face of God,
They say bends over me;
I search the dark, dark face of God —
O what is it I see?

I see — who lie fast bound, who may
Not kneel, who can but seek —
I see mine own face over me,
With tears upon its cheek.

XXXI

Bidden to lay my hands in Grief's,
Bidden to bow my head,
To follow where he led:
The way was past my old beliefs.

Bidden to give to Grief a heart
By life so sore bereft
It scarce could be a gift:
I kept it not, nor any part.

Bidden to offer Grief my mind . . .
Foretaught in all Grief's ways,
It leapt the barrier-days
Of pain! Itself would forge and find.

XXXII

They who this age of Pain have trod,
Of him they strove with made their god;
But I who wrestle with him now
Contend but to uncrown his brow.

His brazen cup with wormwood stored,
I have drained deep, but ever poured
To Joy his sacred portion first:
'T was draught to him did quench my thirst.

Thy crown of thorns though I must share,
Jesu, it blossoms in my hair!
And they who look upon my face
See wreathéd roses in its place.

XXXIII

O great Allayer of our pain,
That some day shuts all eyelids down,
Wilt thou come softly, like the rain,
When he goes through to cleanse the town?

Wilt thou come singing with the wind,
Who shouts and sweeps the dust away,
And scatters thus triumphantly
The little hoarded heaps of clay?

Or smiling silent, as the sun
Who ripens ere they fall to rest,
Earth's flowers and fruits, so one by one,
They mellow drop upon her breast?

O great Allayer of our pain,
O sure Encompasser of all
Our woe: O come gently, as rain
Doth come; Let not thy terrors call.

XXXIV

That day whereon I die they 'll say,
"How bright doth shine the sun!
A little cloud hath flown away,
Its race with darkness done.

"A little cloud hath fallen in tears,
That covered up the morn:
See now the earth sky-beauty wears
And starry flowers are born.

"See now the earth fresh-clad, arrayed
In robes that bear the rose;
A little stormy cloud that strayed
Now homeward, homeward goes."

Yea, of my journey o'er the skies,
My flight unto the flowers,
I pray more beauty shall arise,
I pray more light be yours.

XXXV

Little Sister Rose-Marie,
Chosen bride to Christ she 'll be.
Child — she says she sees her path,
Mild — has felt God-Father's wrath,
Vows her life forth joyfully.
(Visioned unreality).

Harken, Sister Rose-Marie:
Chosen bride to pain I be;
But I never saw his face,
And I never chose my place,
Nor the vow that wedded me.
(O unseen reality.)

XXXVI

My life was too short for sinning,
For sinning or for a shame;
Nor wickedness had no beginning —
Or are they all but a name?

Not even one little folly
Of my own in my brief day;
Only the monstrous folly
Of the world, which is not gay.

No sins there be, says the Father,
For which one is not forgiven.
Then come, sinners, comfort gather:
One 's saintly when one has been shriven!

Then had there been time to squander
One little sin or two,
Just for wantonness and grandeur,
Which would I have chosen to do?

Ah me, I recall now the story
Of a woman mournful and fair,
A sinner, men said — a world-glory
When she wiped Jesu's feet with her hair!

Then I would needs be forgiven,
(Sweet Mary Magdala was such)
O I too would ask to be shriven
For having loved overmuch!

XXXVII

O the burden, the burden of love ungiven,
The weight of laughter unshed,
O heavy caresses, unblown tendernesses,
O love-words unsung and unsaid.

O the burden, the burden of love unspoken,
The cramp of silence close-furled,
To lips that would utter, to hands that would scatter
Love's seed on the paths of the world.

O the heavy burden of love ungiven:
My breast doth this burden bear;
Deep in my bosom the unblown blossom—
My world-love that withers there.

XXXVIII

This morn I cried: "Now I will live,
For Spring comes striding through the land,
With branch and blossom in her hand,
And all dear gifts that she doth give."

This morn I cried: "Now I will live!"
Alas, the frail bright blossoms fall,
And though the Spring have gifts for all,
My gift of life she doth not give.

XXXIX

The Sister wears a long straight gown
That hangs in folds of heavy brown;
Is it to teach there is no garb
Gives entrance to the Heavenly town?

For 't is her swift feet take her there,
'T is her kind hands that build it fair,
Nor need she wait to tread its streets,
For it is neither here nor there.

I go up in my cloak of pain
And try the bright door not in vain;
I slip into the silent squares,
And I may go again, again.

'T is for the living — we who try
To learn life deeply ere we die.
Even pain who draws me near to death
Hath taught me life most patiently.

Even pain, with that same cruel hand
That stripped from me the light of day,
Doth show with fiery far-flung brand
The hills of my still Heaven-land.

XL

Friend, thy page says "Pleasure,"
Friend, my page says "Pain."

But what is the end of our reading?
O it is the same!
Knowledge each will be heeding.

Friend, thy path is pleasure,
Friend, I go with pain.

What is the end of our going?
O for each the same:
Ourselves we shall be knowing.

Friend, thy food is pleasure;
My bread and meat are pain.

What is the end of our living?
For each, for each the same!
Deep sight it will be giving.

XLI

I wondered, ever wondered,
Till my full mind cried, "Take
The great things of thy wonderment
And plan and build and make."

The world was for my wonderment:
O world, art not complete,
That such as I should plan and strive
To lay aught at thy feet?

O wonder of the wide world
Read first at Eden-gate:
"Last creatures of creation
Their final worlds create!"

XLII

O I have made for myself one whole happy
day!
Grief did not steal a morsel of it away.
I shut all the doors of my soul to pain —
He came and knocked at my doors in vain.
And tears, I flung them down in the deep
Sea where I lulled my sorrow to sleep.
And my sighs, I turned them to doves, all
my sighs,
With gray breasts and dreaming eyes.
For I said, "I will be mistress of one perfect
hour;
I will have peace and I will have power;
And I will let the hawks of my fancy fly
And measure the distances in my soul's sky.
And I will give my heart room —
O I will give my heart room
In which to bloom."

All of an ecstasy in one gray cell,
(Where all of a grief has been wont to dwell),
All of a joy, all of a bliss,
And I — I created this!

I made it out of a dim dawn light,
That lapped me and laved me and drowned
pursuing night;
I made it out of a slanting ray
That touched to pearl my prison gray;
I built it out of a distant bell,
Out of a young nun's song at the well;
I fashioned it out of a swaying curtain,
Teased by the mischievous toe of a certain
Rollicsome, frolicsome Zephyr I know —
He pays me visits when the South winds
blow.
(He and his sisters are the wee clowns of
joy,
Droll little wind-maids and droll little boy!)

I made it out of Beauty's self. She
Appeared to me.
O I gathered all that Beauty gives,
For Beauty lives, O Beauty lives!
'T was she in her glorious heart gave birth
To this new creature — Mirth.

Mirth, O Mirth, you too are young,
But of you no gray songs will ever be sung.
Teach me, O teach me in this my one day,
How a forbidden heart may be gay.
Let us set sail for far coasts in ships
Of merriment. Let me learn of your lips
Laughter again. Laughter I had almost for-
got,
And it should be freight of our fanciful yacht!
And have you quaint avenues named of men
Glee?
How far on those avenues will you take
me?

And have you a sister and is her name Song?
What price would she give for my silver
tongue?

Teach me how small a thing is the earth,
Teach me how trivial a toy it is, Mirth.
And then could you teach me to tether you
fast?
"Nay, I'd escape on your own breath at last."

All of an ecstasy, all of a mirth,
In a gray cell had their bright birth.
All of an ecstasy — lived but a day
All of its life. . . . In cells 't is the way.

XLIII

My dearest, fairest hope,
(O life's full bitter tide)
Had his Gethsemane last night
On the lone mountain-side.

Then out upon bare Golgotha
How great and sure he died.
At the right side of him and left,
Two fears were crucified.

XLIV

I am all alone in my little room;
There is no one to see me but the Gloom
O' the eve and the Dark o' the night,
And the eyes of my Fears that affright.
If I smile there is no one to know,
If I weep my tears will not show,
And others are lying alone even so.

There is no one to know save old Pain, who will creep
From cot to cot when the dark hours sleep;
He 'll be gathering up each sigh,
And each little lone heart-cry,
And every strong hope that doth sink,
And each doomed desire, I think,
To mix therefrom our common drink.

O he brews the draught in a broken heart,
And we each give part and we each quaff part,
When he passes the cup around
To the souls whom he hath bound.
Then I will be smiling, O Pain,
When you give me the cup to drain,
That some who come after may smile again.

XLV

O Jesu, how my soul goes forth
To be a friend to thee,
Who had no friend to know thyself,
Who ever walked lonely;

And whom the ages lonelier make,
Upon thy lifted tree.
O Jesu how my soul goes forth
To be a friend to thee.

XLVI

Came one who told of Death's white steeds,
And of far goal on goal,
Where the ne'er-ceasing soul
O'ertakes new hopes, new needs.

O speak not of such after-quest;
Hint not of journeyings,
As they were joyful things —
My little soul would rest.

The anguished leagues that it has gone —
The path of pain each day:
Alas, how long the way
From dawn to dark — and dawn!

O Death may drive his steeds away,
My little soul would sleep;
My body would lie deep,
Nor journey on that day.

XLVII

My little soul I never saw,
Nor can I count its days;
I do not know its wondrous law
And yet I know its ways.

O it is young as morning-hours,
And old as is the night;
O it has growth of budding flowers,
Yet tastes my body's blight.

And it is silent and apart,
And far and fair and still,
Yet ever beats within my heart,
And cries within my will.

And it is light and bright and strange,
And sees life far away,
Yet far with near can interchange
And dwell within the day.

My soul has died a thousand deaths,
And yet it does not die;
My soul has broke a thousand faiths,
And yet it cannot lie;

My soul — there 's naught can make it less;
My soul — there 's naught can mar;
Yet here it weeps with loneliness
Within its lonely star.

My soul — not any dark can bind,
Nor hinder any hand,
Yet here it weeps — long blind, long blind —
And cannot understand.

XLVIII

But if my star of joy should call—
A call as stars may give—
"Awake, O slumbering little soul,
Awake, arise, and live!"

How would a soul reach out to life
From silence and the tomb;
How would a soul unfold to light
And up through darkness bloom!

How would a laughing soul scale Heaven
And star on star let fall,
If o'er the death-song of the worlds
My star of joy should call!

XLIX

Out of my little prison-cell
I send white thoughts and bid them tell
My message to my kind.
The singing wind can bear it best,
For song it should be — glad song, blest
To beauty by the wind.

O white thoughts, this it is ye mean:
"We, born in pain have breathed and been
Nurtured of suffering;
Have heard all silence, lost all light,
Have touched the unknown Infinite
Of fear; and still we sing:

"'Night holds a holy mystery
Of life; red pain is wine, and we
Have drunk so deep thereof

That we are strangely healed of fear,
Strong even through weakness, new-born, near
The inner founts of love.'

"O we knew nothing of the way
When pain became our guide that day —
We assailed him with our fears;
But out upon the weary road,
Bearing his load, we learned the load
Was lighter than our fears.

"And kinder than our cries was pain,
And whiter than our dream his stain.
And fairer and more free
Cell-walls than world-walls, though world-wide,
If love enshackled, hope close-tied,
Joy unconceivéd be.

"Lo, this was granted unto us:
We know not if all men learn thus
From suffering."
O wind,
Out of my little prison-cell
Take my white thoughts and let them tell
My message to my kind.

O star of joy,
Thou that dost whitely bloom
In the darkest fields of doom,
O star of joy,
The deep pools of mine eyes
Meet thee, greet thee, mirror-wise.
O star, my star,
I hold them, joyless, up to thee,
For thee to fathom, thee to fill,
Thou white beauty.

O star of joy,
My lonely, longing heart
Found thee where thou eternal art,
Joy of all joys,
That dwellest past the bound
Where any grief may go his round,
Light of all light —
My darkened life I lift to thee,
For thee to kindle, thee to fill,
O white beauty.

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